

Register results

The following actions have been taken by Federal agencies. They have previously been summarized in CONSUMER REGISTER as proposals. Extent of consumer and other comment is reported when such information is available.

- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** has amended the identity standards for ice cream, ice milk, sherbet and water ices to require that all ingredients in those frozen desserts be listed on the labels. Labeling changes may begin as early as June 13, but because the final regulations were published in the *Federal Register* after April 1, the mandatory effective date for compliance is July 1, 1979 [see summary on "Food labeling regulations" below].

FDA received 476 letters, containing one or more comments, from industry, state governments, trade associations and consumers. Three industry members and 445 consumers commented in favor of requiring full disclosure of ingredients on the frozen dessert labels. Details—*Federal Register*: April 12, page 19127; Sept. 9, 1974, page 32562; July 25, 1974, page 27144. CONSUMER REGISTER: Oct. 1, 1974.

- **Federal Reserve System** (the Fed) has issued a final rule requiring lenders to make disclosures when variable interest rate clauses are used in credit transactions. The rule calls for disclosure of the fact that the annual percentage rate (APR) may increase, the conditions under which an increase may occur, and how an increase would be collected. The Fed says the rule is necessary in order to inform consumers about variable rate clauses and to promote understanding of how these clauses work and how they may affect the amount or payment of a loan. Details—*Federal Register*: April 20, page 20455; Oct. 29, 1976, page 47497. CONSUMER REGISTER Nov. 15, 1976.

- **Housing and Urban Development Dept.** (HUD) has adopted regulations extending eligibility for HUD-assisted housing to single persons who do not qualify as "elderly" or "displaced." (A displaced person is someone who is displaced by governmental action or a person whose dwelling has been damaged or destroyed by a declared disaster.) New rule sets conditions under which single persons are eligible. Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 16, 1976, page 55080; May 9, page 23582. CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 1.

- Beginning Nov. 7, **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** will require uniform professional and patient labeling for intrauterine birth control devices (IUDs). In addition, the patients must be given an easily understood brochure before the IUD is inserted. FDA received 100 comments from individuals, doctors, trade associations, consumer groups, professional organizations and local government health departments. Details—*Federal Register*: May 10, page 23772; July 1, 1975, page 27796. CONSUMER REGISTER: Aug. 15, 1975.

Food labeling regulations

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has set July 1, 1979 as the new mandatory uniform effective date for compliance with all final food labeling regulations published in the *Federal Register* after April 1, 1977. Previous uniform effective date was Jan. 1, 1978, but FDA says industry needs more time to make necessary—and sometimes extensive—labeling changes. This is not a delay in the effective date for compliance—because all regulations published in the *Federal Register* before April 1, 1977 with an effective date of Jan. 1, 1978 will be unchanged.

FDA will periodically set a single mandatory effective date that will apply to all regulations requiring changes in food labels. This procedure should eliminate the "cost of the multiple piecemeal label revisions that might otherwise be required," a cost that "would probably be passed on the consumers in the form of higher food prices."

Special circumstances may justify a different effective date—and those circumstance will be noted when the regulations are published.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 12, page 19234.

Power lawn mowers

July 5 is deadline for comments on **Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC)** proposal to establish mandatory standards designed to make power lawn mowers safer. CPSC has determined that injuries typically result from use of power mowers because of operator contact with mower blade; objects being thrown by blades; fires from gas spillage; electric shocks; and noise causing deafness.

Proposal includes provisions for a control that would stop the cutting blade of a riding lawn mower when the operator lets go of the handles or other controls. Walk-behind mowers would have similar controls for automatic turn-off.

CPSC is holding a public hearing on power mowers on June 13 at 10 a.m. in its third floor hearing room at 1111 18th St., NW, Washington, DC 20207. To speak, write or call—by May 31—Richard Danca, Office of the Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, at the above address; telephone 202-634-7700.

Consumers Union developed the proposed standard. Details—*Federal Register*: May 5, page 23052. CONSUMER REGISTER: Aug. 15, 1974. Send written comments to Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207. For further information call or write Dr. Alan M. Ehrlich, Office of Standards Coordination and Appraisal, at the above address; telephone 301-492-6470.

Electric cars

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) would like to receive comments on how Federal motor vehicle standards apply to electric and hybrid cars, trucks and buses. (A "hybrid" vehicle is one that is propelled by a combination of an electric motor and other power source, such as gasoline.) NHTSA is concerned about the safety aspects of these cars because of their small size—and heavy batteries. July 12 is deadline for these comments.

On July 14, NHTSA is holding a public meeting on electric and hybrid cars at the following address:

9:30 a.m.
Room 2230 Nassif Bldg.
400 7th St., SW
Washington, DC 20590

As part of NHTSA's one-year demonstration program to give financial assistance to participants in its rulemaking procedures, the agency is accepting applications from individuals and organizations who need money for participation in these meetings. [CONSUMER REGISTER: March 1]. Although the June 6 deadline for applying for financial assistance is too late

for most CONSUMER NEWS readers, NHTSA has sent advance copies of the regulations for the demonstration program to consumer organizations and others. NHTSA will try to accept applications received after June 6. For more information write or call Jeannette Feldman, NHTSA, Washington, DC 20590; telephone 202-426-1614.

The meeting is expected to focus on the following points—and written comments should also include these points:

- Anticipated use by private individuals, businesses and government bodies of electric and hybrid vehicles.

- Development of safety standards to handle problems unique to electric cars. Problems include (1) potential for battery explosion; (2) shock hazard from batteries, either in normal use or during a collision; (3) violent movement of batteries during a collision; (4) slower acceleration than conventional cars, increasing chances of collision when cars merge into traffic; and (5) uncontrolled release of energy during a crash from an energy storage device in a hybrid vehicle.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 16, page 24793. Send applications to Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, DC 20590, attention of Associate Administrator for Motor Vehicle Programs. Send written comments to Docket 77-04, Notice 1, Docket Section (above address).

Aerosols

July 12 and 15 are deadlines for comments on proposals by **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** to phase out nonessential uses of chlorofluorocarbons that are used as propellants in a wide range of aerosol products such as cosmetics, pesticides and air fresheners.

As reported in *CONSUMER REGISTER*: May 15, warning labels for such products under the various agencies' jurisdictions are (1) already required (EPA), (2) soon will be required (FDA), or (3) have been proposed (CPSC). The labeling actions are intended to encourage voluntary cutbacks by consumers in the use of these products while the mandatory phaseout is taking place.

The phaseout is proposed because a **National Academy of Sciences (NAS)** report confirmed earlier speculation that chlorofluorocarbons can reduce the earth's ozone shield that filters out harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun. This reduction increases the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth, and scientists fear that such radiation may contribute to skin cancer in humans.

The proposed timetable for phasing out chlorofluorocarbons follows:

- Oct. 15, 1978: The last date any company may make chlorofluorocarbons for use in aerosol products.
- Dec. 15, 1978: The last date any company may use chlorofluorocarbons as propellants in aerosol products.
- April 15, 1979: The last date products containing chlorofluorocarbons may be introduced into interstate commerce. The agencies do not plan to recall products already on the market on this date.

Chlorofluorocarbons used for non-propellant purposes such as in air conditioners and refrigerators are not covered by the proposed actions but will be handled separately at a later date.

This listing, prepared by Marion Q. Ciaccio, is intended only as summary coverage of selected *Federal Register* items deemed of particular interest to consumers, and it does not affect the legal status or effect of any document required or authorized to be published pursuant to Section 5 of Federal Register Act as amended, 44 U.S.C. 1505. *Federal Register* is published Monday through Friday (except Federal Government holidays) by **Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration**. Subscription is \$5 a month or \$50 a year and may be ordered from **Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office**, Washington, DC 20402. Superintendent also sells copies of *Federal Register* for 75¢ each. Free copies of *Federal Register* may be available in libraries.

In addition to the proposed phaseout, EPA will hold an informal public hearing on the phaseout of products under its jurisdiction. Date and address follow:

Aug. 1 - 9 a.m.
Room 3305, Environmental Protection Agency
401 M St., SW
Washington, DC

July 9 is deadline for receipt of requests for participation at the hearing.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 13, pages 24536, 24542 and 24550. *CONSUMER REGISTER*: May 15, 1977 and Dec. 15, 1976. Send comments applying to FDA (by July 12) to Hearing Clerk, Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, Docket No. 76N-0460. For further information call or write Buzz Hoffmann at above address; telephone 301-443-4502. Send comments applying to CPSC and EPA (by July 15) to Hearing Clerk, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW, Washington, DC 20460. For further information call or write Perry W. Brunner at above address; telephone 202-426-9000.

Metric labels for meat and poultry

Agriculture Dept. would like to receive suggestions from consumers on non-confusing and truthful ways to carry out the intent of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 in the area of meat and poultry labels. The Metric Conversion Act was enacted "to coordinate the increasing use of the metric system and to establish a board to coordinate the voluntary conversion by US industries to the metric system."

Sept. 5 is deadline for comments on actions that Agriculture can take during the voluntary changeover period. Some of these actions are:

- Require English weights and measures until a definite conversion date is established and permit voluntary use of metric weights and measures as well. (This is the current practice.)
- Require use of dual weights and measures.
- Allow individual companies to decide whether to use either English, or metric, or dual declaration whenever they want to convert.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 6, page 23182. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250.

TV sets

Japan and the US have reached an agreement which would limit Japan's shipments of color TV sets to the US for the next 3 years. The agreement fixes imports from Japan at 1,560,000 complete sets and 190,000 partially completed sets per year.

The negotiated quota was President Carter's alternative to a recommendation of the **International Trade Commission (ITC)**, based on ITC's conclusion that imported television sets were injuring domestic producers, that the President substantially increase the tariff on imported TV sets.

The negotiated quotas are expected to increase prices of color TV sets less than the increase in the tariff rate would have done. Most analysts believe that the quota will not result in an immediate increase in TV set prices, but the longer term outlook is as yet unclear.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 23, page 26195.

For you

These forms are for you to use, if you wish, in commenting on any Federal Agency proposal summarized in CONSUMER REGISTER. Of course, if you cannot get your comments on the front and back of a form, feel free to continue your comments on additional paper.

Send comment forms to addresses listed in the summaries.

CONSUMER NEWS is publishing these forms in cooperation with **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**.

Rate Register

Trucks

• **Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC)** plans to launch an expanded enforcement program to combat the consumer rip-off of "weight bumping"—the illegal adding of weight to the moving cost of household goods—which takes at least \$20 million annually from the pockets of US consumers who move across state lines.

ICC said 10% of the one million household moves in the US each year result in families being "victimized by a dishonest minority of movers that may add bricks, iron bars or even people to moving vans when they are weighed." Weight is a key factor in determining the cost of interstate moves.

Other methods of weight bumping are altering the weight ticket, preparing false or counterfeit weight tickets, and bribing scale operators.

ICC plans to (1) increase surveillance of weighing of household goods shipments; (2) consider new legislation that would impose stronger penalties on dishonest movers; (3) tell prospective movers about Federal laws that can protect them; and (4) cooperate more closely with state and local consumer protection agencies.

Here are some toll-free ICC numbers for consumers who have complaints about household movers: 800-424-9312 for all states except Florida, which is 800-432-4537 and Washington, DC, which is 275-7301.

Planes

• **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** has authorized Trans World Airlines (TWA) to offer discounts of up to 44%
(Continued next page)

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

by (name of agency) _____

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Name _____ Date _____

Street _____

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Rate Register

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on flights from the West Coast to Boston and Philadelphia. Similar savings under TWA's "Super-Saver" fares are currently in effect on flights between New York and Los Angeles and New York and San Francisco [See RATE REGISTER May 1].

Under the rate plan, the lowest mid-week fare from Philadelphia will be \$227, a 44% saving and the lowest Boston fare will be \$287, a 33% saving.

To be eligible for these fares, consumers must purchase tickets at least 30 days in advance and must stay between 7 and 45 days.

This type of fare was first proposed by American Airlines and later by TWA and United Airlines.

• **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** has approved a 3% fare increase for American and Eastern Airlines on flights from the US to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The increase became effective June 1.

CAB allowed the increase because the requests fell within established ratemaking guidelines.

• **Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)** has approved an International Air Transport Association (IATA) agreement which increased passenger fares between the US and Mexico, effective May 1. Normal economy fares will be set up to a maximum increase of 12% and first class fares set at 135% of the normal economy fare.

Mail

• Following the issuance of a recommendation from the **Commission on Postal Service** to cut mail deliveries and raise postal rates [See RATE REGISTER May 15], **Postal Service (PS)** has announced that the elimination of Saturday deliveries could become effective by early next year, and that first-class postage probably will be increased from 13¢ per letter to 15¢ or 16¢ per letter.

Postmaster General Benjamin F. Bailar recently told a Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee that the new first-class rate could be held to 15¢ by reducing deliveries from 6 days to 5 days per week.

Bailar said the rate increases and delivery cuts could not become effective before PS approved the changes—probably within 60 days. **Postal Rate Commission (PRC)** would then have 60 days to hold hearings and issue an opinion. Congressional approval is not needed for rate increases or delivery changes under a 1971 law which set up PS as a semi-independent corporation.

